



HATCHET COMPANY NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2003



Hello from scenic Afghanistan,

After several delays and being split up over five different aircraft, the troopers of HHC have finally arrived in Afghanistan. Most of the men flew on commercial aircraft from Elmendorf Air Force Base to Manas, Kyrgyzstan. (If you are like me, you will have to look that country up on a map)

For those of us who have been in the Army since before the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was very strange to be staying at an air base that was once a Soviet military airfield. There were even old Russian airplanes and helicopters all over the place. Who would have thought that one day our enemies would be our allies?

Most of the troopers only spent several hours at Manas before flying on C-130s into Afghanistan.



Chaplain Lee entertaining the men on the flight into Afghanistan

Once again, Hatchet company was split up. With approximately half of the company going to Bagram Airfield under the supervision of 1SG Collazos, and the remainder going to FOB Salerno.

Salerno will be our home for the next nine months. I have the great honor to be the FOB Mayor during that time. That means I get to supervise a workforce of local Afghan nationals who help to make Salerno a place suitable for us to live in.

To give you an idea of how we are living, I will do my best to describe the FOB.

Everyone here lives in tents. Each tent houses from 6 to 10 men. Cots are provided to sleep on and a gas fueled stove for heat.



Basic living conditions

This is what they look like when the men first arrive.

There are several ways for the troopers to improve their new "houses." There is plenty of wood on hand for the guys to use to build furniture such as shelves, benches, and desks. There are some very resourceful and talented men in Hatchet Company, let me tell you. Some of the men, such as PFC Kramer from the Scout Platoon, are so good, they have been "volunteered" to build things all over the FOB.

Another way the men are improving their standard of living is to purchase items from the local bazaar. We call it the Hadji Mart. It is located right outside the main gate and the men can go there and buy pillows, mattresses, and straw mats to make their tents a little more comfortable.



The Hadji Mart at FOB Salerno

Other amenities here at FOB Salerno are a new chapel and a new gym. Flush toilets and hot showers (I use those terms loosely, but I have seen worse). A laundry facility is on the FOB where local workers wash and partially dry the men's clothes. The cooks have a 5-star dining facility to rival any of New York's finest restaurants. And coming soon, we will have our own mini-PX which will be run by our very own Geronimos.

The men are doing great. All miss our loved ones, but we are all working hard to make this place a little more like home. The men love receiving the letters and packages from home. Thanks for the support.

HATCHET 6